



# City of Seattle

Mike McGinn, Mayor

## Seattle LGBT Commission

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March 20, 2012

The Seattle LGBT Commission sincerely apologizes for the pain, offense and embarrassment that we caused by canceling our scheduled event with leaders from Israel's LGBTQ community who were visiting U.S. cities. We apologize both to those leaders who were invited as our guests and to the many members of the Israeli, Palestinian, and LGBTQ communities in Seattle and worldwide who were affected by our decision.

The Commission has heard from many individuals who have shared their thoughts, concerns and outrage in emails, social media and phone calls. We appreciate those who have taken the time to reach out to us to express their thoughts and emotions, and we recognize that our actions have also touched many others who have not yet contacted us.

The Commission originally scheduled the event to foster greater dialogue within the LGBTQ community and to meet with Israeli leaders who are working in service of LGBTQ equality. We respect the work they are accomplishing. In advance of the event, we heard from many members of the local community who were concerned that hosting this event implicated broader issues. Much feedback expressed contained deep pain and anger.

At our March 15, 2012 Commission meeting, we listened to extended public comment from members of the public, both in favor of and against the event. This was a difficult decision. Our intent to vote to cancel the meeting was not to make a stand for either side, but to recognize that we could not facilitate a neutral space for dialog and learning and keep the conversation focused on LGBTQ issues versus the larger issues of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship.

We also have heard from many who celebrate the cancellation of this event. We flatly reject the suggestion that there could be any joy or celebration in this outcome.

It is important for us to learn from this experience and to create a deeper conversation. The Commission is meeting with Seattle City Councilmembers and community leaders this week to develop ideas for future dialogue opportunities. We invite all to our next monthly Commission meeting to hear more from our community about the format for this learning dialog. Our next meeting is April 19 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the City Hall Boards and Commissions Room (5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Cherry St., Room L280).

As members of a volunteer Commission, we are deeply touched by the concern and commitment expressed by communities both near and far. We appreciate everyone's commitment to work for equity for our LGBTQ communities.

Sincerely,  
Members of the Seattle LGBT Commission

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